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ABSTRACT

Teacher education, when viewed along a professional continuum from preservice level to beginning level to experienced level, involves a socialization phenomenon which is only minimally described or understood by the profession. Several aspects of the socialization process--career rewards, levels of professional concern, and perceptions of the climate of the workplace--have been studied and begin to explain the changes that occur during the process. Sixty elementary school teachers, grouped at preservice, beginning, and experienced levels, responded to questionnaires assessing job satisfaction, communication patterns, and levels of professional concern. From the data, profiles of each professional level have been developed and differences between each teacher group on the questionnaire items have been analyzed. Job satisfaction ratings of all three teacher groups display little variation contrary to expectations based on the literature and experience. (Author/JMK)

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The Socialization of Teachers: Career Rewards and Levels of Professional Concern

Amy Driscoll

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Paper presented at the Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association, Jackson Hole, Wyoming

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ABSTRACT

Teacher education, when viewed along a professional continuum from preservice level to beginning level to experienced level, involves a socialization phenomenon which is only minimally described or understood by the profession. Several aspects of the socialization process, career rewards, levels of profession concern and perceptions of the climate of the workplace, have been studied and begin to inform of the changes that occur during the process. Sixty elementary teachers, grouped at preservice, beginning and experienced levels, responded to questionnaires assessing job satisfaction, communication patterns and levels of professional concern. From the data, profiles of each professional level have been developed and differences between each teacher group on the questionnaire items have been analyzed.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is an ongoing process with multi-levels of experience. Recent concern for beginning teachers, distress over "teacher burnout" and turnover, and the realization that teachers move through their careers with a real lack of continuity have nudged teacher educators to begin viewing the professional continuum as a paradigm for research and development. Hall (1982) summarized the AERA teacher educator's forum to explore dilemmas in this area and stated that teachers find the various transitions difficult and experience little support. This study responds to Hall's request for a concerted research effort focusing on the linkages between levels of professional teacher development. It will describe the transition from preservice level (before student teaching) to beginning level (1st and 2nd year) to experienced level (5-10 years) in the areas of job satisfaction or career rewards, professional concerns and perceived climate of the workplace in terms of communication patterns.

Modern sociologists and psychologists have studied extensively how people are affected by their occupational pursuits (Blan and Scott, 1962; Taylor, 1968). Although different occupations/professions and individual differences vary the extent of influence, career pursuits do shape people. With respect to teaching, there is a paucity of data on the effects of the teaching profession on its members. Instead there is an abundance of intuitive certainty of distinct changes that occur as a person progresses from the preservice stage through beginning

years to an experienced level. Research on the socialization process which teachers experience could be a significant factor in better understanding the total teacher education process.

Zeichner (1979, 1982) has raised questions concerning the sophistication of our profession with respect to the socialization process and points to salient differences between new teacher expectations and perceptions of school realities and actual conditions of pressure and support. These differences are critical to the development and retention of effective teachers. Both Zeichner and Hall recommend research and theory from industrial and organizational psychology as starting points for this research. This study has incorporated this advice and contributes foundational information to the profession's concern for the quality of the professional life of teachers.

Van Maaner (1975) discusses "organizational socialization" as the "learning of expected values, norms and behaviors;" Horner (1979) has distinguished between the processes that occur before entry, shortly after entry and those that occur as the person gains more experience. Researchers in industrial psychology have examined transition phases through studies of employee turnover and absenteeism (Porter & Steers, 1973); correlational studies on job satisfaction and phases of experiences have provided employers with information on work conditions and employee support. Some of these same concepts and variables can serve as the basis for studying teachers as they progress along the professional continuum.

The teacher education community was first stirred to awareness of

the issues of teacher socialization by the work of Lortie (1977). Generally Lortie maintains that the impact of initial socialization makes a considerable difference on the overall life of an occupation. He compares potent and weak socialization processes and the resulting changes in attitudes, values and work conduct in teachers. Lortie's Five Towns Study (1975) revealed that education is on the low end of the continuum of socialization impact with its loose entry structures, ill-defined selection procedures and minimal induction sequence. Lortie also suggests an analysis of career rewards as an aid to understanding the ethos of the teaching profession. He specifically refers to the organization of career rewards in teaching as fostering a present-oriented rather than a future-oriented point of view, with a limited need to delay gratification with hope of future gain.

Several educational researchers have focused on the connections between socialization and professional concerns of beginning teachers (Pataniczek & Isaacson, 1981; Ryan, 1982; Horner, 1979). However, this connection focus needs to be examined along the entire continuum to describe the socialization preceding entry to the profession and after years of experience. Hall and Jones (1976) postulated a sequence of teacher concerns which progress from self-concerns to task-concerns to impact-concerns. This sequence corroborates well with Katz's (1973) developmental levels of teacher growth from survival to maturity.

Fuller's (1969) developmental conceptualization of teachers' concerns has remained a classic description of one aspect of the professional continuum. The difference between beginning teachers' worries about whether students like him/her or the inability to answer student questions and experienced teachers' concerns for incorporating education theory

into curriculum are stark. Most of the research using Fuller's concern levels has concentrated on the preservice teacher and changes during student teaching (Erickson and Ruud, 1967; Kracht and Casey, 1968); more recent investigations have found that identification of teacher concern levels significantly impacts success of staff development (Hall and Loucks, 1978; Feiman and Floden, 1981) and offers diagnostic help for planning inservice.

When the subject of the professional life of teachers is raised, a common area of dissatisfaction is the lack of collegiality in public schools for the classroom teacher. In an NIE report from the Boston Women's Group (Freedman et al, 1982) isolation in schools appears as one of the most salient sources of job dissatisfaction for teachers. Several sources emphasize isolation as an inhibiting characteristic of the profession (Bullough et al, 1983; Witherell and Erickson, 1978). It may be that the competition and lack of professional stimulation described by Carter and Griffin (1981) as characteristic of teacher educators in academic settings is paralleled in public school settings for classroom teachers.

For purposes of investigating and describing the teacher socialization process from preservice to experienced levels in the areas of career rewards, communication patterns and professional concerns, this project will access both work in industrial psychology and teacher education. Taking heed of the Hall syggestion to access the former, the Job Satisfaction Rating Scale (Dunnette, 1970) will be used to view the career reward aspects of the teacher socialization process. It

incorporates a Maslow hierarchy approach and has been used extensively to consider the effects of job satisfaction on employee attitudes; general health, performance and rate of learning (Dunnette, 1976). The Job Satisfaction Rating Scale identifies career aspects of highest and lowest levels of satisfaction. Earlier pilot work with job satisfaction assessments of experienced teachers (Driscoll, 1982) indicate that communication with peers is a desired source of reward for teachers. Consequently, the Communication Component of the School Structure and Climate Survey (Miskel, 1982) was used to provide indepth data on this aspect of career satisfaction. Although it is not as current as is desirable, Fuller's (1969) work in teacher concerns continues to stand as the major development in this area (Pataniczek & Isaacson, 1981). The Teacher Concerns Checklist (Fuller, 1965) will be used for information on professional concerns along the teacher development continuum.

Study Objectives

This study will describe and compare ratings of career rewards (job satisfaction), communication patterns and frequency and levels of professional concerns for preservice elementary teachers, beginning elementary teachers and experienced elementary teachers. It is hypothesized that ratings of career rewards will differ significantly from preservice to beginning to experienced levels of teachers. It is also posed that communication patterns and frequency of beginning teachers will vary from those of experienced teachers, both will vary from those projected by preservice teachers. This study will also find significant differences in the levels of professional concerns between preservice, beginning and experienced teachers.

METHODOLOGY

Sample. Responses were collected from three groups: twenty pre-service elementary teachers, twenty beginning (1st and 2nd year) elementary teachers and twenty experienced (5-10 years experience) elementary teachers from a large suburban school district. Beginning and experienced teachers were randomly selected from ten elementary schools; the preservice group was randomly selected from elementary education students, prior to student teachers, who expressed interest in teaching in the same school district from which other sample members were selected.

Instruments. The following instruments were administered by mail to all three teacher groups in separate mailings: the Teacher Concerns Checklist (Fuller, 1969); the Job Satisfaction Rating Scale (Dunnette, 1970); and the communication rating component from the School Structure and Climate Survey (Miskel, 1982).

Procedures. After initial contact and random selection of the teacher sample groups, the instruments were mailed individually rather than in one administration to avoid fatigue and diffusion; additionally, administration was counter-balanced to prevent order influence.

Data Analysis. Data was analyzed in two procedures: Summary profiles of each sample group (preservice teachers, beginning teachers, experienced teachers) were prepared to include data trends in age, years of experience, education background and responses to the study's measures; responses to each item on the three study instruments were compared between the three teacher groups by an analysis of variance.

RESULTS

The results of this study will be presented in: first, summary profiles of each teacher group composed of demographic data and ratings on the study's instruments; second, comparisons between each group on responses to the study's instruments in areas of job satisfaction, patterns and frequency of communication, and levels of concern.

Preservice teachers' mean age is 30.8 years, a significantly older undergraduate student population. This data corroborates other descriptive reports of the University of Utah teacher education student population (Driscoll and Gee, 1983). Most of the preservice sample had completed education courses and observation experiences, had begun or planned to begin student teaching immediately; all those sampled are seniors and plan to teach elementary grades.

The mean age of beginning teachers is 27.6 years, slightly younger than the preservice group. All are considered inservice teachers with a mean of 1.2 years of teaching experience, and a minimum of a bachelor's degree. The average number of students per class for these teachers is 27 and the mean grade level is 2.5 (second-third grade).

The mean age of experienced teachers is 35.9 years and the average number of years teaching is 10.5 years. All of this sample have a bachelor's degree and .60 of the group have graduate hours in education. The average number of students in experienced teachers' classes is 29.9 and the mean grade level is 3.5 (third-fourth grade). The mean number of years in their present position for these teachers is 4.35 years.

In the responses to job satisfaction ratings, preservice teachers predicted that promotions, pay and supervision would be the sources of highest satisfaction in their work as teachers, and that co-workers, recognition and benefits would offer the least reward. Beginning teachers also considered pay, promotions and supervision as sources of highest satisfaction; they reported benefits, working conditions and co-workers as sources of least satisfaction. Experienced teachers repeated the same high sources of satisfaction; benefits, recognition and co-workers received ratings of lowest satisfaction for this group.

Insert Table 1 About Here

On the Fuller Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (1969) teachers indicated concerns on a scale from 1 to 5 of not concerned to extremely concerned for areas of their teaching. Preservice teachers predicted the areas of lowest concern to be: lack of instructional material; too many noninstructional duties; and the routine and inflexibility of the teaching situation. The areas of highest concern for preservice teachers were predicted by them to be: guiding students toward intellectual and emotional growth, whether each student is getting what he/she needs and meeting the needs of different kinds of students. The range of levels of concern for preservice students is 2.5 to 4.29.

For beginning teachers, the range of levels of concern is 2.46 to 4.1. The areas reported as those of lowest concern are the routine and inflexibility of the teaching situation, being accepted and respected by professional persons and too many noninstructional duties. Of greatest concern to beginning teachers are whether each student is getting what he/she needs, meeting the needs of individual students and guiding students toward intellectual and emotional growth.

Insert Table 2 About Here

Experienced teachers share only one common area of low concern with the other two teacher groups - the routine and inflexibility of the teaching situation. Additionally experienced teachers reported minimum levels of concern for being accepted and respected by professional persons and doing well when a supervisor is present. Parallel concerns with preservice and beginning teachers for meeting the needs of different

kinds of students and whether each student is getting what he/she needs are reported by experienced teachers. This group reports one unique area of a high level of concern, that is, challenging unmotivated students.

In the area of communication patterns and frequency (See Figure 1) preservice teachers reported that they would probably communicate with other teachers about curriculum plans, student response, scheduling, getting resources, learning needs of students and matters unrelated to school and teaching once a week. Only in the area of "personal gripes or concerns about work," did they expect to communicate less with other teachers, once or twice a month. On all of the described topics combined preservice teachers predicted communication with principals less than with other teachers, a frequency ranging from never to once or twice a semester. Preservice teachers predicted low frequencies for all possible activities in which they might jointly engage with other faculty members (See Figure 1). They expect to cooperate least in jointly teaching lessons, deciding the order in which topics will be taught and determining size of instructional groups; their ratings of expected incidence in these activities is 1.3 times per month. For other activities, the expected incidence of occurrence is 2.3 times per month. Finally preservice teachers predict working 47.5 hours each week in school with 36.7 of the hours spent in isolation of other teachers, an expectation of working alone 78% of the time.

Insert Figure 1 About Here

Beginning teachers report communication with other teachers at a frequency of once a week to several times a week in all but one area of communication (See Figure 1). For matters "unrelated to school and teaching," beginning teachers report an incidence of several times a week to daily. Beginning teachers rated their communication with principals on all topics as ranging from once or twice a semester to once or twice a month. Beginning teachers report low incidence (0 to twice a month) of cooperation with other faculty members with one exception, jointly scheduling use of instructional equipment at a rate of 3 to 4 times per month. This sample works an average of 35.7 hours per week in school with 28.1 hours or 77% of their time spent in isolation of other teachers.

Experienced teachers report a frequency of once a week to several times a week communication with other teachers on all areas of communication. These teachers communicate most often to each other on "matters unrelated to school and teaching." Experienced teachers report a frequency of communication with principals which parallels that of beginning teachers on all topics. On all possible activities in which teachers can jointly engage with other faculty, experienced teachers reported a higher incidence than other teacher groups, a frequency of 1.7 to 3.7 times per month. Of the 39.3 hours worked in school per week, experienced teachers report that 21.6 of those hours are spent in isolation of other teachers. Experienced teachers then work alone only 56% of their work week.

An analysis of variance was computed for all three teacher groups

on all items to determine rankings of significant differences between groups; a post hoc analysis (Tukey) was used to target the differing groups. In the rankings of sources of job satisfaction, preservice teachers differed significantly from experienced teachers in the area of co-workers (See Table 1). In their ratings of professional concerns, preservice teachers differed significantly from experienced teachers in four areas: doing well when a supervisor is present, being accepted and respected by professional persons, getting a favorable evaluation of their teaching and maintaining the appropriate degree of classroom control (See Table 2). Beginning teachers gave significantly different rankings from experienced teachers in only one area, doing well when a supervisor is present.

In the area of school communication, no significant differences were found in frequency of discussion for all topics with other teachers or principals between all three teacher groups (See Figure 1). Three activities of possible joint planning with other faculty showed significant differences between teacher groups. Beginning teachers predicted an incidence of 1.0 times per month to "jointly select topics to be taught," significantly difference from 2.5 times per month reported by experienced teachers. Beginning teachers also differed significantly from experienced teachers in their reported incidence of "jointly deciding order in which topics will be taught" and "joinly preparing lessons" (See Table 3)

Insert Table 3 About Here

DISCUSSION

Job satisfaction ratings of all three teacher groups display little variation contrary to expectations based on the literature and experience. It may be that, with the realities of public school teaching becoming a a popular press item, preservice teachers are quite aware of the strengths and limitations of the professional world they are entering. The ratings don't support the notion that beginning teachers experience major adjustments in their perceptions of job satisfaction as they initiate their teaching careers. The one area of significant difference between preservice and experienced teachers is the satisfaction gained from co-workers. Experienced teachers rate this source very low, confirming findings on teacher isolation (Freedman et at, 1982; Bullough et al, 1983). Preservice teachers, who appear to experience collegiality with their peers during their undergraduate programs, may expect to continue such support and comraderie. Beginning teachers report a lower rating of the satisfaction gained from co-workers, which then appears to decrease with years of experience. The low ratings for recognition by preservice teachers parallel those of beginning and experienced teachers and again demonstrate the awareness preservice teachers may have of the realities of the profession. Interviews with beginning teachers (Peterson et al, 1983) reveal numerous disappointments with crowded classes, few materials, inflexible schedules, interruptions and lack of support; their low rating of working conditions reflect these frustrations.

From the findings on teachers' concerns, it appears that teachers at all career levels have dominant concerns for meeting individual needs

of students. Preservice, beginning and experienced teachers share a common uneasiness with respect to a basic teaching goal, "guiding students toward intellectual and emotional growth." For preservice and beginning teachers, this objective may appear overwhelming in the face of 27 students and the numerous other demands of teaching. Experienced teachers often express a lack of confirmation of their influence on children; the longitudinal nature of the education process precludes many immediate successes for individual teachers. The low concern expressed by all three teacher groups for the routine and inflexibility of the teaching situation may be interpreted as simply an acquiescence to the realities of teaching or a denial of its existence as a valid condition. Interviews with experienced teachers (Driscoll, 1982) revealed an overwhelming enthusiasm for the changing nature of their role, the "newness of every day," the "lack of boredom."

The significant differences in the teacher groups' concerns over "getting a favorable evaluation," "doing well when a supervisor is present" and "being accepted and respected" are not in contrast to the expected confidence of an experienced teacher with an average of 10.5 years of teaching or the initial insecurities of both preservice and beginning teachers. The high level of concern for classroom management on the part of preservice teachers is a common distress and one not easily remedied in undergraduate teacher education coursework. Since this preservice group was beginning student teaching at the time of the interview, "maintaining class

control" is a reasonable cause for concern. The pattern of decreasing concern for classroom management with years of teaching experience is assuring.

The data from the School Structure and Climate survey demonstrates unexpected accuracy on the part of preservice teachers in predicting frequency of communication with both principals and other teachers in the areas listed (see Figure 1). Of greater interest however are the significant differences between beginning teachers and experienced teachers and inexperienced teachers on cooperative school endeavors. This data has a pattern worth educator's note: Preservice teachers expect more working and planning together; beginning teachers experience less than those expectations; and experienced teachers then participate in such endeavors with greater frequency. This pattern is additionally intriguing for two reasons: beginning teachers express both desire and need for such interactions (Peterson, et al, 1983) and seldom actually experience them; and experienced teachers interact cooperatively in a number of planning areas with higher frequency and yet rate co-workers as their lowest source of job satisfaction. An interesting appendage to the latter reason is the 56% of the school week which experienced teachers spend working in isolation contrasted to the reported time spent by beginning teachers (77%) and that predicted by preservice teachers (78%).

Conclusions

The data presented is a preliminary report of a limited sample of teachers. Interviews for interpretive purposes would enrich the

findings; and "shadowing" a group of teachers for ethnographic documentation of the communication patterns would complement the teacher reports. Follow-up studies on the preservice teachers would significantly augment knowledge of this induction phase.

Although the findings do not demonstrate prodigous differences or extreme transitions along the professional continuum, concern for the professional life of teachers is stirred by the reported communication patterns and diminishing satisfaction from colleagial interaction. Mentor systems for beginning teachers have been initiated in some school districts with noticeable success but more attention must be directed to this level of teacher education. It may demand greater coordination between teacher preparation institutions, school districts and teacher organizations to study and provide for support of beginning teachers. Such efforts might also serve to abate some of the heightened professional concerns expressed by beginning teachers.

The same constituents must focus on similar needs of experienced teachers. This group is not lacking in quantity of collegiality but is deriving little gratification from those relationships. If the profession is to attract and maintain teachers, sources of satisfaction must be attended.

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FIGURE 1

School Structure and Climate Stems

Communication Topics

1. General curriculum plans for a class
2. Student reactions to a specific lesson
3. The schedule of teaching activities
4. Getting teaching resources or supplies
5. Learning needs of a particular student
6. Personal gripes or concerns about work
7. Matters unrelated to school and teaching

Planning Topics

1. Jointly schedule use of physical space
2. Jointly schedule use of instructional materials
3. Jointly schedule use of instructional equipment
4. Jointly schedule times when students will meet with particular teachers
5. Jointly determine size of instructional groups
6. Jointly select instructional materials
7. Jointly select topics to be taught
8. Jointly decide the order in which topics will be taught
9. Jointly decide the methods to be used in teaching the topics
10. Joint prepare lessons
11. Jointly teach lessons
12. Jointly evaluate the progress
13. Jointly decide how to handle student discipline problems

TABLE 1

Job Satisfaction Ratings* for

Preservice, Beginning and

Experienced Teachers

Job Satisfaction Aspects	Teacher Groups		
	Preservice	Beginning	Experienced
1. Work	3.2	3.46	3.1
2. Pay	2.0	1.7	1.86
3. Promotions	1.68	2.26	1.8
4. Recognition	3.6	3.7	4.1
5. Benefits	4.3	4.26	5.08
6. Working Conditions	3.4	4.13	3.8
7. Supervision	2.4	3.13	2.7
8. Co-workers	3.56**	4.3	5.29**
9. School Management	3.0	3.4	3.37

* Ratings based on a 1-7 scale, with 1 = high, 7 = low.

** Significantly different at .05 level.

TABLE 2

Teacher Concern Ratings* for Preservice, Beginning and Experienced Teachers

Teacher Concerns	Teacher Groups		
	Preservice	Beginning	Experienced
1. Lack of instructional materials	2.5	3.1	3.1
2. Feeling under pressure too much of the time	3.1	3.1	2.9
3. Doing well when a supervisor is present	3.29**	3.26**	1.9*
4. Meeting the needs of different kinds of students	4.29	4.06	4.2
5. Too many noninstructional duties	2.88	3.0	3.2
6. Diagnosing student learning problems	3.47	3.7	3.4
7. Feeling more adequate as a teacher	3.0	3.4	2.6
8. Challenging unmotivated students	3.8	3.6	3.9
9. Being accepted and respected by professional persons	3.05**	2.8	2.2**
10. Working with too many students each day	3.2	3.46	3.1
11. Guiding students toward intellectual and emotional growth	4.0	3.86	3.8
12. Whether each student is getting what he/she needs	4.0	4.1	4.0
13. Getting a favorable evaluation of my teaching	3.47**	3.2	2.45**

Table 2 (continued)

Teacher Concerns	Teacher Groups		
	Preservice	Beginning	Experienced
14. The routine and inflexibility of the teaching situation	2.88	2.46	2.37
15. Maintaining the appropriate degree of class control	3.9**	3.3	2.7**

* Ratings based on a 1-5 scale, with 1 = not concerned, 5 = extremely concerned.

**Significantly different at .05 level.

TABLE 3

Areas of School Communication Incidence*

in Which Teacher Groups Differ

Significantly

Areas of School Communication	Teacher Groups		
	Preservice	Beginning	Experienced
1. Jointly select topics to be taught with other faculty	1.2	1.0**	2.5**
2. Jointly decide order in which topics will be taught with other faculty	1.2	1.0**	2.4**
3. Jointly prepare lessons with other faculty	1.4	0.4**	1.8**

* Incidences are rates from 0-5+, according to which comes closest to the frequency of occurrence per month.

**Significantly different at .05 level.